THE

HARVARD LYCEUM.

No. 17.] *Cambridge, February* 23, 1811. [Vol. I.

POETRY.

THE AD,

A POEM IN TEN BOOKS. BY J. LOWBARD.

BOOK VIII.

ARGUMENT.

THE origin and progress of Conundrums—Of an honourable family—Collateral branch, the Puns—The influence of Puns civil, military, and religious—Ths Jesuits in Paragua—James River Tobacco—Present course of exchange between Great Britain and America—Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant—Our forefathers.

WHETHER it be necessary or possible to allege any adequate excuse, for delaying the eighth book of the AD, gives us little solicitude. So certainly convinced are we, that its appearance will be hailed with rapture, that we cannot suppose any time will be spared from its perusal and praise, to censure the tardiness of its advent. Without then a tedious apology, which, if the plain truth were told, would be ultimately resolved into laziness, and disinclination to incur the labour of reviewing and making the necessary ex-

tracts from this book, we present it to our readers, with our wishes that it afford them instruction.

Its subject is one of present notoriety, and we are sure that an elegant, ingenious, and poetical account of the origin, progress, and present situation of Conundrums will not be neglected by publick curiosity. This fashionable substitute for wit is traced by Mr. Lowbard up to the fifteenth century, and to Mahomet the second, who sacked Constantinople, and subverted the eastern empire. That proud conqueror inquired why Constantine Palæologus was like the pyramid, that propped the eastern corner of the dome of St. Sophia. When the flattery of his officers had replied, that they could discern nothing in the enemy of their lord, which was similar to the well balanced strength of that massy column, the Sultan solved his question and completed his Conundrum by the reply—because he is the last stay of a falling dome. The translation destroys the spirit of the answer, but in the original the same word might mean the dome of the temple, and the royal house, of which Constantine was the last descendant. To this imperial pleasantry Mr. Lowbard aludes in the commencement of his book. The mention of Mahomet the second however tempts him to dwell awhile on the sack of Constantinople by the infidels.

PLATE VIII. *Opposite page* 567.

And the pale twinkling of the evening *star*.
Lights eager squadrons to the unceasing war.

Sidus sculpsit. *Stella pinxit.*

Against the walls the faithless crescent pours
The hostile fury of its iron showers.
The mammoth cannon throws his sweeping levin,
And mocks the flash, that bursts the gaping heaven.
The first fair beams, that usher in the day,
Shine on their shields, and from their helmets play;
And the pale twinkling of the evening star
Lights eager squadrons to the unceasing war.
Within the walls what scenes of woe appear!
Strange mournful cries assail the afflicted ear.
Matrons and virgins to the shrines repair,
And tears and sobs suppress the unuttered prayer.
The last brave Romans man the assaulted wall,—
Deserve to triumph, but condemned to fall.
Their fatal engines spout their fires amain,
And pour a strange destruction o'er the plain.

But we must leave the Turks, to be scorched with the Greek fire, and proceed with our poem. Having unfolded the origin of Conundrums, and asserted their title to the grand Seignour's throne, the poet introduces the collateral branch of the family, the Puns.

They come, the PUNS, a strange two-natured race,
Like Pagan JANUS of a double face.
Wit flies aghast, retreating as they move;
But lettered babies court the nymphs they love.
With smiles that speak, and rapartee of eyes,
Good lively converse from the circle flies.
The Puns usurp their place, whose tyrant power
Chills the free heart, and damps the social hour.
Gone is the careless air, and fled at once
Alternate question with its smart response:
And all must find, a poor unlovely task,
A pun to answer, and a pun to ask.

The poring eye the wrinkled abstract face
Announce the Punster's unremitted chace.
No force avails his headlong course to curb :—
He twists the noun, and clips the unbending verb,
Supplies a consonant, a vowel drops,
Inserts a hy-phen, or removes the stops ;
Till the poor words, bent, tortured, and transposed,
Perform their duty, and the pun's composed.
And this is wit!—For this no more we hear
The sprightly dialogue's intermingled cheer.
We quit the radiance of meridian light,
For hasty flashes and Cimmerian night.

In illustrating the influence of Conundrums on civil, military, and religious affairs, the poet adverts to " Good king Charles' golden days," when the best punster was the best man, and a brace of good Conundrums was worth the ambition of a laborious life. The enervating effects of the indulgence of all kinds of mechanical wit on the mind are represented as very serious ; and Mr. Lowbard solemnly assures us, that no person deserves the name of a great statesman, hero, or divine, that cannot resist a temptation or disregard an opportunity to make a pun. The difference between the character of Buonaparté and general Burgoyne, is enforced, to this purpose, with apparent satisfaction.

Hear nations, hear his pun, his pompous boast !
" Ten thousand men may traverse all their coast."
Traverse, indeed they did, unarmed and bound,
Our plains from Laurence, to Long Island sound.
Go if you will, and to your king repeat,
' You meant a pun, you never thought to beat.'
Then cast your eyes where France's hero pours
His dauntless squadrons on the farthest shores.
His prowess sways the Russian's boundless plain,
And waddling Dutchmen crown his countless train.'

No pun-y efforts claim his precious time ;
His jokes are grand, his very smiles sublime.

Mr. Lowbard asserts that Puns and Conundrums were introduced into Paragua, by the Jesuits ; but does not communicate the authority, that fortifies this opinion. It is probably a mere conjecture, founded perhaps on the fact, that the Jesuits exerted themselves to win the affections and conciliate the good will of the natives, and by conforming the Christian religion to some of their prejudices, to protect it from the odium, which it might otherwise have incurred. That Conundrums and Puns were transported by the Jesuits, to amuse the Indians, is therefore sufficiently probable to be a subject of the licentia poetica.

Round the large fire the ruddy chiefs convene,
Smoke the calm pipe, and stretch them on the green.
Then he, the father, reverend e'en in fun,
Cracks the loud joke, and twists the ingenious pun.
The broad horse laugh distorts the Sachem's jaws,
And chuckling Sanops echo back applause.

Thus led to mention Red men, Mr. Lowbard takes the other step, and introduces the subject of Black men : asserting their superiority to Europeans, in the lower kind of wit. He displays a philosophical dexterity, of which Lucretius might be proud, in his conjectures as to the probable cause of this superiority.

Whence comes it then that blacks in wit excel,
And, if they serve completely, joke as well.
For still we find the readiest wit has place
Behind the vizor of a smutty face.
Whether, when nature formed the race at first,
She baked and browned them like a Sunday crust ;

So that their brains at easiest impulse snap,
Like sailors' biscuit, at the gentlest rap.
Whether, to show their ivory teeth the while,
'Twas given them aye to joke and aye to smile:
Whether, since wit and musick, hand in hand,
Are knit and joined by sympathetick band,
The black must be the master of the jest,
And joke the better as he fiddles best:
Are knotty questions in dame nature's book,
On which, though none can read, the world will look.
Perhaps (lor let the laughing muse bestow
Her tribute too, to mourn unpitied woe,)
Perhaps the giddy head and thoughtless heart
To the poor *slave* a soothing charm impart.
When lawless power locks on her heaviest chains,
And savage tyrants mock defenceless pains,
When the poor wretch to some dark nook would creep,
To sigh with pine trees and with torrents weep,
Blest is he, if his spirits bear the weight,
The dull dead burden of his hopeless fate;
Blest, it a playful fancy cheer him on
To toils for others borne, and work for others done.

While dwelling on the blacks, Mr. Lowbard alludes to the late unfortunate reduction of the price of James River Tobacco, in the foreign markets.

In vain the artful owners pour their praise;
The prices lower, while costs of storage raise.
The parched up leaves no longer yield the juice,
Which the new crops of recent plants produce.
Cask upon cask on hand—their patience gone—
They sell alas! for profit less than none.

The distress, which ensues, lead our author to consider some of the other embarrassments of English commerce. He specifies the course of exchange, which is so much

against it, and combining the ruinous speculations in Tobacco with this standard discount on their profit, he concludes that they must be reduced to a state of depression, which the want of Mr. Cooke's animating personations may render very serious. Thus noticing Mr. Cooke, his Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant is alluded to.

And I have heard, nor rarely is it found,
The flattering tongue's attractive artful sound.
And I have seen the cringing body bend,
And the quick look a smile or wrinkle lend.
Oh! how I hate the whole deceptive race,
Their humble posture, and their Proteus face;
Whose supple limbs, like ocean in a storm,
Change with the hour, to catch the ruling form,
Whose servile minds, with quick perception, read,
The great man's wishes, and the patron's need,
Adore his friends, his foes, whoe'er, revile,
Shake at his frown, and revel in his smile,
Run at his nod, and at his beck return,
Weep with his tears, and with his passions burn,
Smooth down each obstacle, that bars his ways,
Though wrong applaud them, and though foolish praise,
Till every barrier to his course give place,
And leave the moral turnpike's level face.
So the hot iron, in the housewife's hand,
Moves o'er the muslin, like a fairy's wand.
The wrinkly surface smooth and smoother grows;
The folds all vanish where the flat-iron goes,
And what was now a rough and wrinkled mass,
Is smooth as Mercury, and shines like glass.
So when our fathers, long on ocean tost,
Reached Plymouth's snow-clad hills and rocky coast,
Saw those tall pines, by blasts and winds untorn,
Which years on years the rage of storms had borne,

Their daring band, by danger undismayed,
Reared the keen axe's civilizing blade.
The wondering land a novel face assumes,
The cornfield rises, and the garden blooms.
And where just now the pine had spread around
His read sear foliage on the uncultured ground;
Large stores of pulse and fruit the orchards bear,
The rich potatoe, and the juicy pear.

ESSAY ON AKENSIDE'S PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

The name of Poetry at the present day is most generally connected with the idea of amusement. That pampered taste, which so universally predominates; that ardent devotion to the muse, when arrayed only in her gayest and most trifling apparel, or tricked out in her most preposterous finery; and that cold indifference, when she assumes a garb of dignity, or presents herself in the form of instruction, are unfortunately so prevalent, as to reduce some of the purest and most sublime didactick poetry to general neglect and disesteem. Small indeed is that class of readers, among whom the more exalted strains of genius are preferred to the tuneful warblings of a luxuriant fancy. We search in vain through the shelves of many modern libraries for the works of Milton or of Young, which have been unfairly supplanted by the productions of the romantick and fascinating genius of our own time. This is said, however, by no means to discharge the claims, or to encourage the neglect of contemporary merit. We only intend to deny the justice of those claims, when urged too far, and to inculcate that neglect, when we see encroachments made upon evidently superiour merit.

Among the several poems in the English language, of whose desertion and neglect we think there is this just ground of complaint, the poem of Dr. Akenside on the Pleasures of Imagination must undoubtedly be numbered. Not that we mean to insinuate a universal disregard or ignorance of this beautiful writer; we rejoice that we have more confidence in the literary taste of our own country. There is no doubt, that a few persons have been fortunate enough to be induced to read and to study him, and have had discernment enough to admire him; that there are others, who would belong to the same class, but whom chance or opportunity has never made acquainted with him; nay more, there may be a considerable portion of the reading community, who possess a superficial acquaintance with this poet, but who, from the apparent want of interest in his writings, or from the intricacy of his style, or perhaps from some other equally indefensible cause, have neglected him as a writer, unworthy of attention, or at least of very inferiour claims. To this latter class of persons, we shall in the sequal of these remarks offer a few observations. The poem itself now claims our attention.

In every work, whether its general design be entertainment or improvement, we seldom anticipate the character, or form ideas of its excellence or demerit, until its particular object be ascertained. A poem of so indistinct and vague a title as the Pleasures of Imagination, will excite in the minds of different readers very different expectations. One class will anticipate a gay and amusing work of fancy, while a more sober set will easily perceive that the subject is capable of being treated, according to their own congenial philosophical notions. Perhaps to this principle may be traced the cause of that eagerness and curiosity with which we consult the title-page or the argument of a book, and the irresistible inclination we possess to judge of a work before our knowl-

edge of it renders us capable of deciding with any degree of certainty.

The grand and preeminent object of this work was to open a new species of criticism; a species, which by chance had escaped the penetrating researches of all former criticks, but which could claim the superiority to almost every other, from its intimate connexion with the nature and constitution of man. Preceding writers had indeed laid down rules for the constitution and form of a poem; they had shewn where the more solid materials of an edifice of that kind were to be obtained; they had given direction for the arrangement of the parts; and had even descended so far as to offer their instructions respecting the proper disposition of ornaments. But farther than this external, mechanical structure, they scarcely extended their investigations. It was reserved for Akenside first to point out the sources of that inexpressible charm, which those poetick structures had possessed. It was for him to trace their pleasing influence to actual principles, implanted by nature in the human mind. Aristotle, the father of criticism, Horace, Boileau, Addison, Pope, and many other masters of the excellent art, had given to it indeed a "form and pressure;" they had wrought it to a high degree of perfection, but in a great measure, it was like mechanical perfection;—it was for Akenside at length, to breathe into it the breath of life, and to inspire it with a divine animation. It is true, Addison had just led the way; his penetrating mind and exquisite taste did wonderfully conduce to extend the progress of the art of criticism towards that standard, which it has gained in later days. He investigated with considerable success the properties and characteristicks of the imagination, and on his distinction of those forms of being, about which it is most conversant, did Akenside lay the foundation of the poem which we are now discussing. That distinction is generally

known. *Greatness*, *novelty*, and *beauty*, according to Mr. Addison, are the three characteristick properties of being, when it is considered as in any way delightful to the imagination.

Notwithstanding Mr. Addison had been so successful in distinguishing the three great sources of the pleasures of imagination, yet the difficulty of laying down any precise rules for the use of them in poetical composition still remained. That Dr. Akenside was aware of these difficulties may be seen in the following expressions:

> ——for fruitless is the attempt,
> By dull obedience and the curb of rules,
> For creeping toil to climb the hard ascent
> Of high Parnassus. Nature's kindling breath
> Must fire the chosen genius; nature's hand
> Must point the path, and imp his eagle wings,
> Exulting o'er the painful steep to soar
> High as the summit; there to breathe at large
> Æthereal air; with bards and sages old,
> Immortal sons of praise.

Yet, in spite of these obstacles, he proceeds on what he calls

> ——a doubtful task;—
> To paint the finest features of the mind,
> And to most subtle and mysterious things
> Give colour, form, and motion.

Having traced the pleasures, which external objects confer on the human imagination up to a divine source, the mind of the Deity itself, the author explains the cause of the natural variety of constitution in the minds of men, which is so obvious to every observer. This variety, he says, was instituted with the wisest intent by the hand of nature, which

> ——on peculiar minds
> Imprints a different bias.

This diversification of talents and tastes he ascribes to the claims of social life, which urge the active powers of man to different labours.

There can scarce any thing more poetical be conceived, than this author's description of a fine imagination, and the state of the mind in the enjoyment of those pleasures which it affords:

> As Memnon's marble harp, renowned of old
> By fabling Nilus, to the quivering touch
> Of Titan's ray, with each repulsive string
> Consenting, sounded through the warbling air
> Unbidden strains; *e'en so did nature's hand*
> *To certain species of external things*
> *Attune the finer organs of the mind;*
> So the glad impulse of congenial powers,
> Or of sweet sound, or fair proportioned form,
> The grace of motion, or the bloom of light,
> Thrills through imagination's tender frame
> From nerve to nerve; all naked and alive
> They catch the spreading rays; till now the soul
> At length discloses every tuneful spring
> To that harmonious movement from without
> Responsive. Then the inexpressive strain
> Diffuses its enchantment; Fancy dreams
> Of sacred fountains and Elysian groves,
> And vales of bliss; the intellectual power
> Bends from his awful throne a wondering ear
> And smiles; the passions, gently soothed away,
> Sink to divine repose, and love and joy
> Alone are waking; love and joy serene
> As airs, that fan the summer.

We venture to assert, that the above extract cannot but be read with pleasure by every person, whose mind is in

the least susceptible of the delights of poetry. It possesses a delicacy and an elegance, which will not fail to charm.

The author has displayed considerable ingenuity in assigning *final causes* to the primary pleasures of the imagination. When we examine the constitution and affections of our souls, we perceive that they are capable of being impressed by external objects in a variety of ways. Now certainly an inquisitive and philosophical mind must be gratified with the explanation of the particular reasons of these different susceptibilities, with which it is endowed. We presume the doctrine of Akenside is satisfactory. At least, his theory, if not completely defensible, is honourable to human nature, as well as to its divine Author. For instance, why was man endowed with the love and admiration of whatever is sublime and noble in the works of nature or of art,

> But that the Omnipotent might send him forth
> In sight of mortal and immortal powers,
> As on a boundless theatre to run
> The great career of justice ; to exalt
> His generous aim to all diviner deeds ;
> To chase each partial purpose from his breast,
> And through the mists of passion and of sense,
> And through the tossing tide of chance and pain
> To hold his course unfaultering, while the voice
> Of truth and virtue up the steep ascent
> Of nature calls him to his high reward,
> The applauding smile of heaven ?

Who could wish for an explanation more satifactory? What could more redound to the honour of our Maker, than the wisdom thus displayed in the constitution of man, in which he has implanted a principle, by the operation of which we are led imperceptibly in the ways of truth and virtue? It is from the same principle likewise that our ideas

of infinity and our hopes of immortality are derived. For the soul, impatient of resting beneath her native quarry, and grovelling amid the humble scenes of earth, soars on the wings of imagination, to the distant and unknown regions of creation. When arrived thus far, what power can impede her career? She holds on her course unceasingly, and attains untired the remotest barriers of the universe :—

> There her hopes
> Rest at the fated goal. For from the birth
> Of mortal man, the Sovereign Maker said,
> That not in humble or in brief delight,
> Not in the fading echoes of renown,
> Power's purple robes, or pleasure's flowery lap,
> The soul should find enjoyment ; but from these
> Turning disdainful to an equal good,
> *Through all th' ascent of things enlarge her view,*
> *Till every bound at length should disappear,*
> *And infinite perfection close the scene !*

Again ; the scrutinizing mind of our author no less satisfactorily accounts for that love of novelty or wonderfulness which is so prevalent and inherent in the breast of every man. He could not be persuaded that Almighty Wisdom had implanted a principle so powerfully operative in the soul, without some special reason, or at least without bestowing on it an office, of dignity vastly superior to that of a vain and wondering curiosity.

> Far otherwise designed
> Almighty Wisdom ; Nature's happy cares
> The obedient heart far otherwise incline.

The final cause of pleasure arising from novelty is the expansion and devotion of the soul ; the enlargement of its powers ; and its improvement in knowledge and wisdom.

It is for this the adventurous youth quits his beloved home and friends, and ranges through distant regions. It is for this,

> The pensive sage,
> Heedless of sleep or midnight's harmful damp,
> Hangs o'er the sickly taper:

And even to this principle he traces the avidity, with which the virgin pores over the fascinating novel or romance;

> unmindful of her form,
> Unmindful of the happy dress that stole
> The wishes of the youth, when every maid
> With envy pined.

Hence also the painful delight so visible in youthful minds of listening to the tales of horrour, with which imprudent guardians too often gratify their trembling curiosity.

These are instances, where this principle is erroneously directed; but still these are sufficient to afford ample evidence of the beneficial purposes to which it may be applied when under the direction of wisdom and of experience. The same curiosity and love of novelty, which will induce the ardent youth to disobey his parents' commands and wishes, or the romantick maid to waste her hours and beauty over a fairy tale, or the little wondering circle to gape with astonishment at the exploits of ghosts and hobgoblins, will also powerfully allure them to the pursuits of knowledge, and make them as ardent for truth, as they could ever be for the illusions or delights of fiction.

There remains a third principle, for which the author has not yet accounted. This is the love of beauty. His hypothesis here is as singular as it is ingenious. He supposes nature to have instituted the particular modification of external or physical beauty, for the purpose of indicating moral and internal perfection. His arguments are not a little to the point.

> The generous glebe
> Whose bosom smiles with verdure, the clear tract
> Of streams delicious to the thirsty soul,
> The bloom of nectared fruitage ripe to sense,
> And every charm of animated things,
> Are only pledges of a state sincere,
> Th' integrity and order of their frame
> When all is well within, and every end
> Accomplished.

There is danger, however, that this doctrine will be perverted. For the general assertion, that whatever appears beautiful is the actual indication of something morally or physically good, will not be warranted by experience. Nay, how often are we deceived by appearances! It is the great business of life to guard against the delusions of our fancies, and to labour with unremitted perseverance for the discovery of real good, which often lies beneath a deformed and repulsive exteriour. There should therefore be a distinction made between real and specious beauty. The one offers itself only to a misguided fancy: the other is the delight of a well regulated understanding. Fictitious beauty is assumed as a garb to conceal the deformities of vice; real beauty is the natural and unaffected costume of virtue.

THE INSTITUTIONS OF CHIVALRY.

The institutions of chivalry have something so romantick in their nature and objects, there is something so consonant to our best feelings in a profession, among whose objects was the gratuitous relief of distress, and the unsolicited vindication of the cause of innocence, that our prejudices may easily be enlisted in defence of such institutions, against the decision of our severer judgment. Let

us endeavour to examine the influence of the institutions of chivalry, on some of the most important relations of men in society, and strive to gather from the observation of this influence, in several different points of view, the real character it should sustain. By devoting then a little attention to the influence of chivalry on religion and morality, on the state of civil law, and on manners in general, we may perhaps pluck away from the brows of the old knights some sprigs of their laurels, and lessen that reputation, which they gained by their gallantry, and which the reverence for antiquity has almost consecrated.

The investiture of knights errant was performed with all the pomp of the Roman Catholick ceremonial. Prayers to a tutelar saint, invocation of his protection, and vigils at his shrine, vows to assert his power, confide in his assistance, and to impute success to his interference, had the unavoidable effect of impressing the candidates with a romantick sense of the reality of the superstition, under the banner of which they were enlisted. They reposed no confidence on their spears or their shields, their swords or their mail, till they had been sanctioned by a blessing, or consecrated by the contact of some relict. When they had commenced their adventures, that success which was the result of personal courage, strength, or skill, was attributed to the B. V. or good St. Nicholas. So that the whole system of chivalry was calculated to confirm and perpetuate the superstition, under which it grew and flourished. The veneration of this superstition, which had originated in the inventive solitude of a cloister, spread to the castle and the field. What was at first the tribute of the bigotry and self-interest of a narrow-minded or ambitious priest, became the devoted regard of the valorous warriour. Thus was a means provided of securing to the papal religion the attachment of a class of men, who were least disposed by their habits of life to be

the dupes and the slaves of a tyrannical superstition. And this means was effectual. At the voice of the popes and of their emissaries, the heroes of Europe were collected, from the cold plains of the north, from the fair valleys of Italy and France, from the woods and mountains of Germany and Spain, and the pleasant fields of England. The servants of the cross heard the powerful summons, and marched with their followers to the holy wars. It were vain to spend time in enumerating the vices, the follies, and the corruptions, the disregard of all right of property and the prostration of all principles, that bind society together, that resulted from those fearful collections of armed madmen, that fought to redeem the holy sepulchre. The only real trophies of the crusaders are the desolation of Europe by their absence, the ravaging of peaceful countries by their passage, the ruin of armies by their conquests, and the death of millions by their defeat. To this we may add that every triumph of their power was a victory of the papal cross, and every trophy of their success a seal of papal infallibility. Had it not been for these institutions of chivalry, a reformer might have arisen in the tenth century, and Peter the Hermit have achieved the enterprize of Luther. Such is a mere sketch of the influence of chivalry on religion, and not less undesirable were its effects on the laws of conscience and of civil society.

Accustomed to decide every difference by their own power, and to return every insult by private revenge, the knights looked upon the office of the magistrate as a sinecure, the powers of which if recognized would encroach on the privileges of their swords. Nor was this all. The weak and the defenceless, the oppressed vassal and the forlorn maiden, instead of applying for relief to legal protection, solicited the support and confided in the prowess of some respected or favoured knight. Thus was the law dis-

regarded both by the strong and by the weak. By the strong as beneath their notice, by the weak as incompetent to their protection. The bravest knight, therefore, not the highest officer, was the strongest avenger of injustice, and the most powerful protector of weakness. Such an establishment as this had the tendency to interest all the parts of society, the knights and the squires, with the vassals and the ladies in the depression of the legal power. A word need not be wasted to enforce the misery which such a state of things must involve. The laws by being thus generally despised fell into disuse, and were at length forgotten or reduced to trifling forms of publick ceremonial. This was to destroy the basis of all improvement. It not only sunk the nations into barbarity, but took from the hope of regaining civilization: for whoever looks for any other security of social rights than legal power, whoever would repose on the passions and caprices of a crazy knight, what ought to be confided to rules and principles, whoever would establish upon every particular occasion a temporary substitute for the uniform and universal decision of regular jurisprudence, disregards that power of law, whose " seat is the bosom of God, " and whose voice is the harmony of worlds."

We must now consider the influence of chivalry in that light, which is supposed to afford the most favourable view of the subject, viz: its effects on manners. It is a pretty common notion that the progress of refinement and the advancement of civilization was much promoted by these institutions. But I fear it is a mistaken opinion, that refinement in society can ever be promoted at the expense of rational religion and established laws, which are necessary to bind the consciences, and regulate the actions of men. The refinement that sprung out of chivalry was an extravagant gallantry and ridiculous punctiliousness of honour. Women had indeed been depressed below that honourable rank,

which nature enabled them and designed them to fill. But chivalry exposed the errour to introduce another equally mistaken, and infinitely more ridiculous. Women were brought forth by it indeed from obscurity, but it was to the glare of the most public notice, and to the authority of unlimited influence. Instead of rising to proper respect, they were exalted to adoration. A fair lady's request (for it may here be observed, that unless a female were adorned with that pretty transitory flower, beauty, she might live in oppression, and die without the revenge of knight or squire) became the mandate of power, and a fair lady's smile the object of ambition. Nor did this unnatural preponderance of female influence produce the effect, which we should naturally think it would, of preserving their delicacy from violation. When we read Amadis of Gaul, or Palmeryn of England we discover, that the dulcineas were not so squeamish as we might have thought them. They would turn with contempt from the deformed dwarf, and with horrour from the overgrown giant, and with good reason; but a well-favoured, good-proportioned, able-bodied knight had seldom to complain of their cruelty or their coldness. To the passion of gallantry every thing sacred or social, every law of conscience, of justice, and of humanity was secondary and inferiour. Was a lovesick miss tired of the wholesome authority of a devoted father, she had only to wave her fair hand from a window, and the first knight that rode by was her servant and champion. The point of his spear became the law of the father, whose death or acquiescence was the undutiful alternative. Was a fair dame weary of her husband, did she sigh for a prouder fortune, or lust for happier nuptials, she might command the whole knighthood and accomplish her divorce. The obligations of her marriage would be washed out in the blood of her spouse, and the remembrance of its deficiencies in the arms of her deliverer.

Life, property, and happiness, were thus suspended on the breath of female caprice. And it is a perversion of language to call such gallantry refinement. Attractive from the splendour of life, which success insured, the profession of knighthood was crowded by candidates of all conditions. The humble might follow their masters in capacity of squires, and feast their credulous avarice by dreams of wealth and power, the trophies of his valour and the gifts of his liberality; and the most exalted might be proud of the privileges which knighthood successfully arrogated. Thus was every valuable pursuit and occupation deserted, and that of knight-errantry flourished on the ruins of all. Nobody was left at home to cultivate the earth but the abject peasantry, whose labour was at best the property of their lord, and might be wrested from him by the first champion who excelled him in power.

On the whole then, the institutions of chivalry were founded on principles which are calculated to produce the subversion of all that unites the parts of society, and of all that tends to promote social happiness. Superstition was its soul, violence its means, and an extravagant and unnatural gallantry its end. But as it was accompanied with the eclat of splendid success, as there was something in its semi-barbarian spirit, that well accorded with the genius of the ages, in which it flourished, it was thronged with multitudes and existed long. But there is scarce a doubt, that it much retarded the progress of improvement. It was a most effectual means of fixing the attention of its votaries on the specious, and withdrawing it from the defective, parts of the Roman Catholic superstition. It threw into obscurity the power, and discouraged the cultivation of law. It called men from their homes, from the peaceful prosecution of private concerns, whence progressive refinement is sure to result, to scenes of violence, injustice, and bloodshed. Its

professed object was to revenge wrongs, to protect defenceless innocence, to succour the oppressed, and chastise the tyrant; and in doing this it violated property, it was headstrong, unfeeling, extravagant, and ridiculous. It cherished but to excess an amiable passion, till that passion swallowed up the reason and the understanding. Let us not then suffer the discourteous imputation of ungallantry, when we pronounce the institutions of chivalry, whatever they may seem through the mists of six centuries, unjust and unnatural in principle, and ruinous in their spirit and effect; and that the whole body of knights errant, when stripped of their swords, their lances, and their shields, their coats of mail, their crests, and their scarfs; and withdrawn from their castles, their excursions, and their titles, exposed in their true nature, and unsurrounded by a dazzling blaze of glory, were a lawless set of robbers and murderers, a throng of lazy, unprincipled ruffians, and the grand enemies of the rights of man.

ON RELIGIOUS TESTS.

It is a grand question of law, whether a right reside in government of instituting religious tests, whose subscription is the condition of all privileges of state. If we decide the question by authority, almost every government will give its vote in the affirmative. In England, which is the freest country in Europe, the test acts, though they have been relaxed in their rigour, are strict and extensive. The settlement of the dispute would involve a determination of some of the oldest controversies in ethicks and politicks, and will probably never take place. We cannot however help remarking, that the prejudices against them are strong and active, and that the sensibilities of men are easily excited

against the principles, on which they are founded, and the efforts of putting them in practice. And this circumstance affords a striking instance of the inconsistency of the human mind.

You may often see a man declaiming with spirit for the rights of conscience, and reprobating the tyranny of religious tests, who shall the next moment applaud the distribution of offices to the members of a particular political party, to the exclusion of all others, whatever be their merit or their claims. It is called a mighty hardship by some, to be obliged to testify a belief in certain religious articles, when no reluctance is felt in subscribing a political creed as long as your arm. To profess that you believe in the Christian religion, and that you disclaim the pope, is said to be tyrannous and inquisitorial, when it is nothing to say, I believe in president Madison, I believe in Mr. Smith, I believe in the embargo, and I believe in the non-intercourse.

It seems as if there were a great defect in this respect, in the modes of organizing government. It certainly is not even good policy to exclude from all offices those, whose opinions differ from those of the president. Is a man a worse post master-general, for having some scruples as to the non-importation act; or the worse judge of the circuit court because he doubts about West Florida? Surely no man can pretend to *justify* such an exclusion, whatever may be said of the policy of it. Citizens have an equal right to the offices, and superiority of merit should decide their claims. Finally, what sort of religion is it, to make no odds whether a man believe in one God or twenty, in one Saviour or none, in one Divine Spirit or in no Divine Spirit; and yet exclude from a post, which he is well calculated to fill, the worthy man, that happens to think that general Pinckney is a patriot, or that the U. S. Bank charter is not unconstitutional.

But with respect to religious tests, the reason why a government should not institute them, or at least should not make them minute and specifick, is that their subjects are about matters, which do not immediately concern society. After a man believes the Christian religion, it makes no difference, as it respects its conduct as a member of society, whether he be a Trinitarian, an Arian, an Eutychian, a Nestorian or Apollinarian, whether he be a Calvinist, or an Arminian. Perhaps it is to the discredit of Christians, that their doctrines have so little effect on their actions. Still the truth is certain that this effect is little; and those sentiments which one would think unavoidably involved practice, viz: those of the necessarians, do it so little, that bishop Butler was induced to say, "Suppose this scheme of fatali-
"ty in any way applied to practice, such practical application
"of it will be found absurd and fallacious in a practical sense:
"And though it were admitted, that this opinion of neces-
"sity were speculatively true, yet with regard to practice it
"*is as if it were false*, as far as our experience reaches."

Since then the subjects of religious test do not affect the state of civil society, they are unlawful and oppressive. And this is the reason why the political tests, which are virtually established, are likewise unlawful and oppressive. It is true, that the conduct of officers in some posts must necessarily be influenced by their political sentiments. But this is not the case with respect to most offices; and as we observed above, a man may fill many of the most responsible stations in society, to the highest advantage to the community, let his politicks be what they will.